

Reporter

ST. CHARLES COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Larry Farris, NRCS Soil Conservationist, Retires



Larry Farris, Soil Conservationist in the Troy Field Office, will complete his last day with the Natural Resource Conservation Service on December 30, 2011, after 39 years of service.

Larry's long history with the agency began in 1972 in Milan, Mo.,

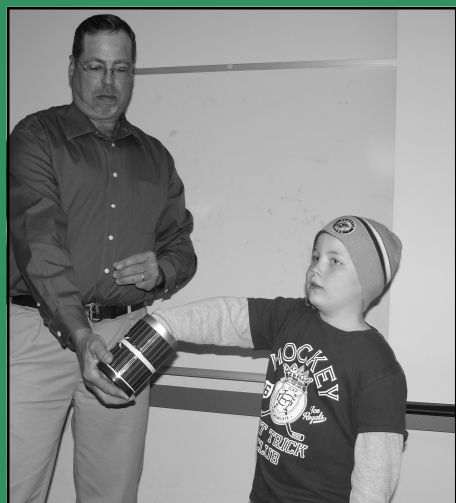
where he assisted with flood control structures in the watershed districts in Sullivan County. He came to Troy in January of 2009, and joined the local team, working to put conservation practices on the ground in both Lincoln and St. Charles Counties. January 1, 2012, will mark the first time that Larry has not been employed since he was 12 years old.

Larry and his wife, Peggy, have two daughters and two grandsons. The grandsons are especially excited about having more time with their grandpa.

Area Businesses Donate Door Prizes for Meeting

The following businesses and individuals generously donated door prizes for the SWCD Annual Meeting.

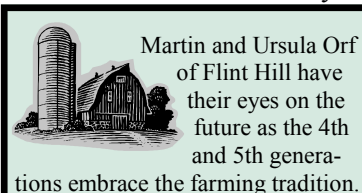
Charlie's Farm and Home
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Leonhard Insurance Agency
Charlie Perkins and Jo Robertson
Greene's Country Store
Main Street Diner
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Mordt Tractor
Old Monroe Elevator
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Straatmann Farm Service
Sydenstricker Implement Co.



Mark Scott (left), SWCD Board of Supervisors Chairman, is assisted by Campbell Eckhardt, son of Perry and Christi Eckhardt, in the door prize drawing. Campbell's dad is the local Urban Forester for the Missouri Department of Conservation.

Three Generations Proud to be Farming

When Anton Orf and his wife Johanna, left his parents' farm in Augusta, Mo., and purchased 160 acres near the growing town of Flint Hill, Mo., the year was 1864. Anton, a German immigrant as a boy, was settling in a prosperous town that boasted a hotel, a saloon, a tailor shop, a tobacco factory, a blacksmith and an attorney. Flint Hill was thriving,



Martin and Ursula Orf of Flint Hill have their eyes on the future as the 4th and 5th generations embrace the farming tradition.

and Anton set out to see his own dreams thrive as he turned the soil, built a home and began a family.

Little did he know, or perhaps it was a part of his dream, that five generations later a young man by the name of Andrew Orf would be walking that same soil, farming that same land hand-in-hand with his dad and granddad.

Andrew Orf will be the fifth generation in the Orf family to continue the farming tradition, and nothing could make his grandparents happier. "He's a good, hard-working boy," said his grandma Ursula Orf.

"Andrew is very interested in farming and has been helping me and his dad (Gerard) for years," added Martin Orf, current owner of the property and the most recent recipient of the Soil and Water District's Cooperator of the Year Award.

Readers have surely guessed by now that this is a Century Farm—a designation given to farms that have remained in the same family for over 100 years. Tracing back the family line.....Anton and Johanna had eight children, with the youngest, Leo, born in 1881. Leo found his sweetheart in a girl named, Margaret, and the couple eventually had seven children....the youngest of which is Martin. When asked about the coincidence of the youngest Orf descendant taking over the farm, Martin replied, "The youngest gets caught here. The older brothers work the farm until they marry or find other work...and then the next son in line works the farm with

[See Orf, pg. 3](#)



Three generations of Orf farmers work side by side on the Flint Hill Farm: (from left) grandson, Andrew; Martin and Ursula, and son, Gerard.

District Holds 67th Annual Meeting of Cooperators

Nearly 100 St. Charles County agricultural landowners joined the NRCS staff and SWCD staff and supervisors for a Thanksgiving-style dinner at the District's 67th annual meeting of cooperators. Besides the tasty dinner, catered by Marsha Perotti, the group enjoyed a presentation by Cornelius Alwood, Master Gardener and bird enthusiast. Alwood shared interesting information about local birds and played the audio of their songs. He then challenged the crowd in a test of bird identification.

After a brief update on conservation program activities, Mark Scott, SWCD Chairman, announced the landowner who was chosen to receive the Cooperator of the Year award. This year, the board extended that honor to Martin Orf, a Flint Hill area farmer, who is also this issue's "Farm Feature" (top of page). Orf has installed and maintained many practices over the years, designed to protect productive soil on his farm.

Again this year Greenway Network's Charlene Waggoner attended the meeting to bestow recognition and congratulations to a person or organization in the community who is making a notable contribution to the protection of natural resources. The district board nominated the City of Portage Des Sioux to receive this award titled the Exemplary Environmental Practices for Landowners award, specifically for the accomplishments made by the city in establishing and maintaining the Portage Des Sioux Nature Area. The city received assistance from several groups including the Natural Resource Conservation Service and Great Rivers Greenway. The nature area has trails, wetlands, a wet prairie, bottomland forest, environmental education signage and benches. Through the use of grants and volunteers, the city has been successful in not only protecting wild areas, but providing a beautiful place for county residents to get close to nature.

Waggoner presents the award to Portage Des Sioux's Mayor Mark Warner (above).



Seated at the front of the above picture are Betty and Gene Ehlmann, long-time friends of the district. Gene was a member of the Board of Supervisors for many years, and Betty now volunteers.

At left is Cornelius Alwood, Master Gardener and guest speaker of the evening.



Martin Orf (left) received the Cooperator of the Year Award, presented to him by SWCD Board Chairman, Mark Scott.



Fleur De Lis Holds Rain Garden Workshop



At left, Perry Eckhardt addresses the attendees of the Oct. 15 workshop, with butterfly girl scouts sitting up front. Above, Bob Deardeuff gives a tour of the rain garden outside the Renaud Spirit Center.

The Fleur De Lis Garden Club held a Rain Gardens and Rain Barrels workshop for county residents at the Renaud Spirit Center in O'Fallon. The center has a functioning rain garden on the property, designed by O'Fallon's Landscape Manager Bob Deardeuff and Storm Water Management Coordinator, Michelle Gremminger.

Elaine Fix, president of the local chapter of Fleur De Lis, said her garden group chose this project to inform residents how they can contribute to the protection of clean water resources by constructing both functional and beautiful gardens in their yards. The garden club recruited area Girl Scouts who dressed as flowers for the event.

Speakers included Deardeuff, Gremminger, and Perry Eckhardt, MDC Forester, who also has extensive experience in the county working with storm water issues and low impact development.

Mark These Dates:

Pond Management Workshop — The Missouri Department of Conservation, the Lincoln County SWCD, and the NRCS are teaming up to host a Pond Management Workshop on Monday, January 23, 2012. The event will take place from 6:30 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. at the University of Missouri Extension Office in Troy at 880 W. College Street. Topics will include pond building basics, cost-share opportunities, fish stocking, water quality, fish habitat, fish population management, and nuisance vegetation control. The workshop is free, however seating is limited. To register, contact the Lincoln County NRCS office at 636-528-4877, ext. 3.

Prescribed Burn Workshop — The Missouri Department of Conservation will be holding a Prescribed Burn Workshop for landowners on Tuesday, February 7, 2012, from 6:30 p.m. until 9:00 p.m., at the University of Missouri Extension Center in Troy at 880 W. College Street. The course will be taught by Missouri Department of Conservation certified burners. Participants will learn about the value and purpose of prescribed fire as a land management tool. Attendees will receive instruction on how to safely and effectively plan and conduct a controlled burn. A demonstration burn is planned for attendees at a later date. Completion of a burn workshop is required prior to having a prescribed burn plan prepared for your property. This workshop is free, however seating is limited. Contact the Lincoln County SWCD at 636-528-4877, ext. 3 to register.

Certified Arborist Examination Training — The Community Tree Council of St. Charles is sponsoring a series of instructional classes as preparation for a Certified Arborist exam. The classes will be given by International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborists and will cover all 10 domains of the ISA exam. Classes will be held on Wednesday evenings, 6:30—9:00 p.m., beginning January 4 and ending March 21. Fee for participation is \$50. Registration is required by January 4. The classes are funded by the Community Tree Council in partnership with the University of Missouri Extension and the Missouri Department of Conservation. To register, call Scott Killpack, University of Missouri Extension, at 636-970-3000, ext. 110.

NRCS Conservation Program Ranking Dates Announced

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has **continuous sign-up** for several conservation programs, but those programs also have "ranking periods" which are cut-off dates for funding consideration for that particular period.

Landowners wishing to participate in a program can sign up at any time, but should keep in mind the ranking dates so as not to miss out on the funding round for a particular period. Various ranking dates are set throughout the year, allowing NRCS to rank submitted proposals for funding consideration. NRCS then notifies all applicants of the results of the ranking and begins to develop contracts with the selected applicants. Landowners wishing to participate in 2012 in one of the following programs should sign-up before the listed ranking period cut-off date.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP):

One of the most popular conservation programs, CSP provides an annual incentive payment for practices you may already be doing! The program provides many conservation benefits including improvement of water and soil quality, wildlife habitat enhancements and adoption of conservation activities that address the effects of climate change. Eligible lands include cropland (including hayland), pastureland and non-industrial private forest land in the uplands and bottomlands. **The cut-off date for this ranking period is January 13, 2012.**

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP):

This program provides financial and technical assistance to install and implement structural and management conservation practices on agricultural land including cropland, pastureland/hayland and/or forestland. Practices are

also available to address animal waste/feeding concerns, and organic and seasonal high tunnels for vegetable producers. **Cut-off date for this ranking period is February 3, 2012.**

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

(WHIP): This program provides financial and technical assistance on private agricultural land and nonindustrial private forest land to assist in establishing and managing fish and wildlife habitat. Eligible participants may receive assistance to develop upland, wetland, riparian, and aquatic habitat areas on their property. **Cut-off date for this ranking period is February 3, 2012.**

On-Farm Energy Initiative: With this program, an Agricultural Energy Management Plan (AgEMP) is developed based on a farm energy audit to assess energy consumption on an operation. NRCS then recommends energy conservation measures. **Cut-off dates for the ranking periods are February 3, March 30 and June 1, 2012.**

Organic Initiative: Certified organic growers and producers working to achieve organic certification can install conservation practices. Applicants meeting or exceeding a threshold score may be approved for an EQIP contract before the end of the ranking period. Those rating below the threshold score will be deferred to the next ranking period. **Cut-off dates for the ranking periods are February 3, March 30 and June 1, 2012.**

Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative: NRCS will help producers plan and implement the steel-

framed, polyethylene-covered structures that extend growing season in an environmentally safe manner. High tunnel benefits include better plant and soil quality, fewer nutrients and pesticides in the environment, and better quality air due to fewer vehicles being needed to transport crops. **Cut-off dates for the ranking periods are February 3, March 30 and June 1, 2012.**

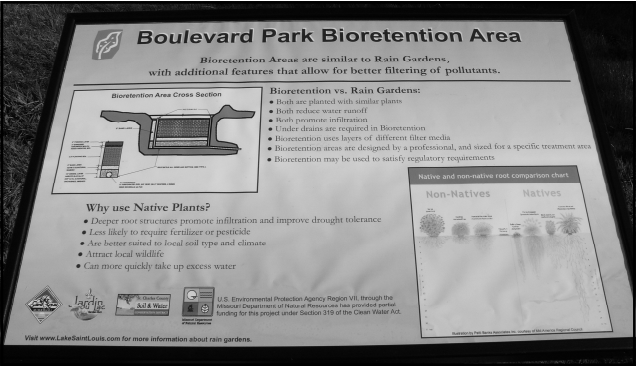
Additional ranking periods for EQIP and WHIP may be announced at a later date. Any landowner interested in any of the above practices should **call the NRCS at 636-922-2833, ext. 3**, to get sign-up and deadline details. With continuous sign-up, farmers and landowners are encouraged to call at any time to get their name on a applicant list.

For Owners/Operators with Drainage Ditches

NRCS will hold a meeting in February to update owners and farm operators who have shared drainage ditches on Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) changes.

Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP):

This program provides assistance to landowners affected by Missouri River flooding, and may cover up to 75% of the construction cost for most restoration measures including levee repair and sediment removal from shared drainage ditches. EWP projects must have a local sponsor such as cities, counties, levee districts, and drainage districts. Don't wait for the next big flood: **Contact NRCS for meeting dates, and be prepared.**



Lake St. Louis Completes Stormwater Structure Display

The City of Lake St. Louis recently completed work on a storm water structure demonstration site located in Boulevard Park on Lake St. Louis Boulevard. The two storm water practices at the site are designed to demonstrate the purpose and practicality of such structures in both home and business settings. The bio-retention area demonstrates the type of structure that would be used in a commercial or residential development to capture storm water runoff before it leaves the site, temporarily holding the water so it can infiltrate the ground rather than flow freely to



the nearest water feature. The rain garden gives a good example of the type of structure that a homeowner might install to capture and slow the runoff from rain gutters or in low spots in the yard. Both of these practices are designed to protect existing surface water features in the area. This project was designed by the Director of Public Works Derek Koestel, and the Project Manager Maria King, with plant selections provided by the city’s arborist/horticulturalist Lorri Grueber. Volunteers included the Jardin de Lac Garden Club, Ann Finkeling, Missouri Master Naturalist, and St. Charles County Soil and Water District employees.



Orf, from pg. 1 dad....and when it got to me, I looked behind me and there were no brothers left.” Martin began farming in 1951, and by 1954 had added another 160 acres. He also had already added his “better half” into his life with his marriage to Ursula Vomund, the pretty daughter of Joseph and Elizabeth Vomund, dairy farmers in St. Paul, Mo. Martin and Ursula eventually had three children of their own, and now boast six grandchildren of whom they are very proud. Their first daughter, Virginia, married Steve and have three children: Dennis, Diane and Dale; second daughter, Nancy, married Steve (coincidentally the sons-in-law have the same first name), and have one daughter, Nicole; and their youngest child, Gerard, is married to Jeanne, and they have two kids, Andrew and Shelby.

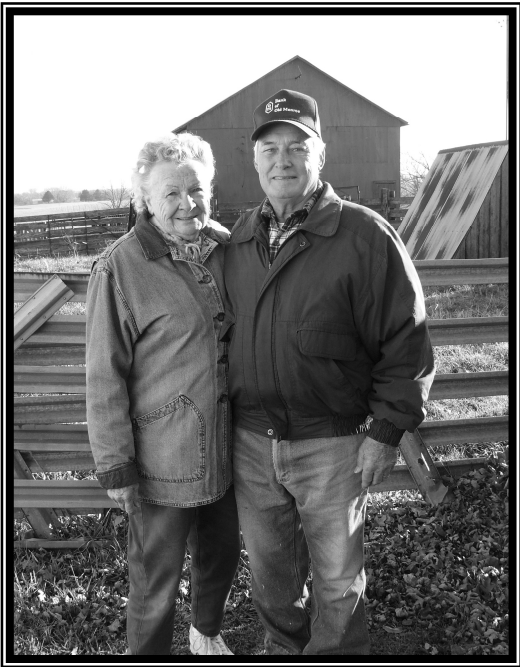
Gerard, the fourth generation, farms alongside his dad, and is also employed as a full-time firefighter in the city of St. Charles...similar to Martin who was a volunteer firefighter in Wentzville for 25 years. Not straying from tradition, Andrew, who is now 15 years old, has told his grandparents that he wishes to be a farmer and firefighter as well.

“With Andrew’s interest in the farm,” said Ursula, “the Orf farm might even make 200 years.”

And that seems to have been Martin’s plan all along. He worked the farm alongside his dad until 1963, and was focused on farming in a way that would ensure the land would remain productive for years to come. His first conservation practices were installed over 40 years ago. He put terraces in himself because he was not happy with watching the soil wash away after a rain. He knew how precious the soil was to the long-term success of his farm, so he plowed in the terraces with a plow—not a method commonly used today, but one that did the job all those years ago. Since then, Martin has worked with the NRCS and SWCD to install one mile of waterways and nearly two miles of terraces. He also has 12 acres of CRP ground and is in his 15th year of that program. Some of the early area conservationists who assisted Martin were Denzil Hamby and Les Volmert.

Besides corn and soybeans, the Orfs have some beef cattle for which Martin is looking into pasture management.

“My plan is to keep the soil healthy and keep this farm in the family and in production,” he explained. By the looks of things on the farm, Martin has done a superb job and with God’s grace, Gerard’s assistance, and a little luck, Andrew will be saying the same thing in 50 years or so!



Ursula and Martin Orf



Reporter

ST. CHARLES COUNTY

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Rotational Grazing and Multiple Species Forage Mixtures Increase Net Profits

A recent scientific article in the Agronomy Journal, summarized by Crops and Soils Magazine, addressed the problem of long-term, real-life studies of whole farm production in relation to grazing and forage mixtures. Management Intensive Grazing has become more popular over recent years, and this is because there are proven results reporting increased net profits attributed with decreased feeding and harvesting costs. Scientists wanting to study forage mixtures in relationship to productivity and cost, would need to observe a grazing system for multiple years, making such a study difficult and expensive. An alternative to a real-life study is the computer simulation study researchers use. It looks at all important production aspects including land use, cropping systems, planting and harvesting, and integrates the data with different management scenarios and recorded weather data over a 25 year period.

Researchers were able to run their models through eight different management scenarios (two grazing strategies, and six forage alternatives) and compare the scenarios to a representative farm. The base farm represented a 247 acre dairy farm in Pennsylvania where the soil was a clay loam of medium depth with gently sloping terrain. Alfalfa was harvested as silage (1st, 3rd and 4th harvests) with the second harvest being dry hay. Maize was harvested as silage to fill the existing silo; the remaining maize crop was harvested as high-moisture grain. The pasture was grazed by all classes of cows during the growing season. Two grazing management strategies and six forage treatments were simulated and compared. The model also ran long and short term analyses, as well as extreme weather analysis. A few conclusions are summarized:

- 1) Pastures with three or more species of forage is a useful strategy to prevent losses during a drought
- 2) When nitrogen prices are high, lowering the application rates or including legumes in pasture is more cost effective
- 3) During a drought, net return increased as mixture complexity increased compared to a monoculture.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service and St. Charles County Soil & Water Conservation District have funding available through EQIP and state cost-share to improve pastures by subdividing fields with cross-fencing, installing watering systems and improving pastures by inter-seeding legumes. The state cost-share program requires attendance at an approved grazing school. The Missouri Forage and Grassland Council website has a list of grazing schools throughout Missouri: <http://agebb.missouri.edu/mfgc/schools.htm> The 2012 dates will be posted early in the New Year.

Call or stop by the office to learn more or to pick up literature that may be helpful. Publication topics include: Watering Systems, Electric Fencing, Extending Grazing and Reducing Stored Feed Needs, and Soil and Pasture Health Guide. Contact the NRCS or SWCD at 636-922-2833, ext. 3 for more information.

**St. Charles County
Soil & Water Conservation District**
160 St. Peters Centre Boulevard
St. Peters, MO 63376-1695
636-922-2833, ext. 3

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Shawn Keller, Soil Conservationist
Curtis Hoeft, Soil Conservationist
Kervin Bryant, Soil Conservationist
Deb Frazier, ACES

Construction Plans May Affect Office Hours

The St. Peters FOSA office (SWCD, NRCS, FSA) will experience remodeling activities in the near future. A date has not been set, but once construction begins there may be short-term office closures. Business will continue, but employees may need to make alternative arrangements when meeting with cooperators. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Notice to Hispanic or Women Farmers and Ranchers Compensation for Claims of Discrimination

If you believe that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) improperly denied farm loan benefits to you between 1981 and 2000 because you are Hispanic, or because you are female, you may be eligible to apply for compensation. You may be eligible if: 1) you sought a loan or farm-loan servicing from USDA during that period 2) the loan was denied, provided late, approved for a lesser amount than requested, approved with restrictive conditions, or USDA failed to provide an appropriate loan service, and 3) you believe these actions occurred because you are Hispanic or female.

If you want to register your name to receive a claims package, you can call the Farmer and Rancher Call Center at 1-888-508-4429. The claims package will have detailed information about the eligibility and claims process.

The mission of the Soil & Water Conservation District is to conserve the soil and water resources of the county; promote the wise use of these resources through education; protect residents from undue hardship caused by erosion, sedimentation and flooding; protect the agricultural soil base to ensure continued productivity; and preserve the quality of water and water courses within the county.